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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Over-All Appraisal of Air Strikes Against North Vietnam Through 31 July 1965 (S)

General:

1. (TS) The magnitude of US/RVN air activity against North Vietnam during July 1965 paralleled June's level of effort. During July, 84 air strikes were conducted against JCS-designated and special targets. Of these, 80 strikes were flown by US aircraft and the balance by a combination of US/VNAF aircraft. These air strikes further eroded national capacities as follows: barracks reduced 4.4%; ammo depots reduced 8.5%; POL storage reduced 5.2%; and supply depots reduced 2.8%. Additionally, 69 armed reconnaissance missions were flown against LOCs, targets of opportunity, and coastal shipping.

DRV Military Reaction:

2. (TS) The North Vietnam reaction to the air strikes included the introduction of SA-2 missiles into their air defense system. On 24 July, a flight of four F-4C aircraft was subjected to missile attack, which resulted in the loss of one aircraft and damage to the other three. A considerable reconnaissance effort has been conducted to determine the location from which the missiles were fired.

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on 26 July. While it has not been possible to date to locate precisely the source of the missiles fired, Sites 6* and 7** are the most suspect. The possibility of the missiles being fired from other unlocated -- possibly temporary -- sites cannot be discounted. On 27 July, an operation was implemented aimed at destroying Sites 6 and 7. Post strike photography failed
DIA review(s) completed.

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** C30-2

to reveal bomb damage at either site, but there was evidence of moderate damage to buildings in the vicinity of the Cam Dai prison compound, 1.5 miles south of Site 6. On 10 July, two MIG aircraft engaged a flight of four F-4Cs about 35 miles northwest of Hanoi. The two MIGs were destroyed by SIDEWINDER missiles, which raised to five the number of MIGs lost in air engagements since the initiation of air strikes last February. Subsequent to the most recent MIG losses, MIG activity has been passive and confined to flight training in an area east and northeast of Phuc Yen. However, there is no evidence of an abatement in AAA activity which probably accounted for a considerable portion of the 16 US aircraft lost this month. No VNAF aircraft were lost during ROLLING THUNDER operations in July. As of 31 July 1965, 71 US aircraft were lost in air operations against North Vietnam.

Effect on Military Targets:

3. (TS/NFD) While the results of the air strikes and armed reconnaissance against North Vietnam's lines of communications are relatively easy to gauge, such is not the case with the fixed targets which were attacked during July. There is no evidence of ammunition depots being restored and only two reports of secondary explosions at targets struck. Therefore, it is considered likely that DRV ammunition stores have been effectively camouflaged and dispersed. It does not appear that an ammo shortage exists to date, but deliveries are probably being delayed. Although damage to barrack type targets has been extensive, the loss of these facilities has probably had more of an adverse psychological impact on the troops rather than any impedence to direct military operations. The three airfields attacked during July have not been subsequently utilized

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although action was taken to restore the cratered runways at two airfields. Through reactivation of airfields north of Hanoi and construction of revetments of the airfields in the Hanoi/Haiphong areas, North Vietnam appears to be seeking more flexibility in dispersing their aircraft in anticipation of air strikes into the Hanoi/Haiphong areas. See Tab A.

Effect on DRV Economy:

4. (S) The immediate impact of the air strikes on the North Vietnamese economy has been slight, probably reducing the output of the GNP by a few percentage points. Costs of reconstruction of the roads and bridges, power plants, and POL storage facilities will represent about five percent of the total annual investment. The longer range impact of these air strikes may be more significant. The country is barely self sufficient in food, industrial output is small, and there are ambitious plans for economic expansion. All elements of the economy are strained. Further disruptions will aggravate this strain and place the regime under greater obligation to other Communist countries. See Tab B.

North Vietnamese Public and Political Reaction:

5. (S/LD/NFD) During July, statements by DRV leaders and articles in their official press indicate that the government of North Vietnam will persevere despite continued US/GVN air strikes. The DRV White Book, published 19 July, stated that by "recklessly stepping up" the war in the North, the "US imperialists" are angering "all" Vietnamese people, who become more resolved to "hit hard and accurately at the enemy until final victory." In mid-July, an article by Defense Minister General Vo Nguyen Giap in the Communist Party theoretical journal, Hoc Tap, repeated this theme and added "we need to make every preparation to prepare to defeat the US

aggressors in case they expand their war to the whole of our country."

General Giap had also stressed this theme in an interview in Cairo earlier in the month as well as the familiar theme that the cessation of the US bombing of North Vietnam was one of the prerequisites for any negotiations to settle the Vietnamese situation. On 25 July, the Hanoi daily, Nhan Dan, carried an editorial on the occasion of the DRV's shooting down the "400th" US plane over North Vietnamese territory. In this article, Nhan Dan claimed, "We have been fighting well and at the same time carrying out our production tasks well. All branches of the economy are developing at an accelerated pace and are meeting the requirements of the war, and of the peoples' life." Additional government propaganda efforts include a continuing attempt to convince the North Vietnamese populace, and the world, that US aircraft are not aiming at military targets but at civilian institutions.

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Conclusions:

6. (TS) During July, there were no indications that the US/GVN air strikes had brought the government of North Vietnam any closer to a

willingness to negotiate. On the contrary, their determination to continue the conflict was manifest both in military and diplomatic actions. DRV logistic support problems in the southern part of the country have been further aggravated and their ability to support external overt aggression has been impeded. In the main, the capability of the armed forces of the DRV to execute their primary mission has not been altered appreciably this month. The loss of equipment, small ships, vehicles, and rolling stock will pose problems for the North Vietnamese who depend almost exclusively upon materiel aid from other Communist countries. However, additional aid, including military equipment, has been promised and there is tangible evidence of its subsequent arrival.

7. (U) This report has been discussed with CIA.

3 Enclosures
Tabs A thru C a/s